SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: Sir, it is a very important question. I demand a half-an-hour discussion on this question. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to give notice for that. Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Stepping up of agricultural exports

@*145. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govt. have any plan to step up agricultural export; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Government plans to promote export of agricultural commodities like superfine varieties of rice, fresh fruits and vegetables, processed foods, cashewnuts, spices, oilcakes, meat and meat products etc. in a big way. This is considered essential to step up investment in the agricultural sector, raise the income generation capacity in the rural areas and sustainable growth with equity in our exports. Government, therefore, attaches high priority to encourage the establishment of export oriented units (EOUs) in this sector. The units in this sector can now import capital goods and equipment easily at a concessional rate of duty. Various inputs and materials required in agriculture and allied activities have also been made freely importable. In case of items like rice, fresh fruits and vegetables, floriculture items, spices and processed foods where there is potential for rapid growth, Expert Groups were set up. Based on the recommendations of these Groups detailed Action Plans have been worked out and follow up action is being taken on them.

@Previously Starred Question 85, transferred from 30th July, 1993.

Upgradation of airports to international standards

*146. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to upgrade a number of airports in the country to international standards and to equip them to receive charter flights from abroad;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) the number of airports in Bihar which are likely to be upgraded to international standards in the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Hyderabad airport is proposed to be upgraded to international standards.

Under the model airports scheme, space is being earmarked for immigration and customs clearance at the airports covered under the scheme so as to facilitate operation of chartered fligts carrying foreign tourists. The airports covered under the scheme, besides Hyderabad, are the following:—

Jaipur, Lucknow, Patna, Guwahati, Imphal, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Nagpur, Coimbatore, Calicut and Vadodra.

(c) National Airports Authority at present, has no plan to upgrade any airport in Bihar to international standards.

*147. (Transferred to 18th August, 1993

Delay in registration and transfer of shares

@*148. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI:

SHRI RAMSINH RATHWA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that registration and transfer of shares lodged with the companies are getting delayed beyond statutory time limit;

@Previously Starred Question 108, transferred from 3rd August, 1993.

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps are being taken to cope with the increased work-load and to avoid unnecessary harassment to public?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Delay in registration of transfer of shares in, or debentures of, some of the companies has come to the notice of the Government.

(b) The delay in transfer of shares/ debentures, inter-alia, is due to one or more of the following reasons:—

(i) Transfer deeds not duly executed and stamped;

(ii) signature of transferor in the transfer deed does not tally with the specimen signature available in the company's records;

(iii) instruments of transfer lodged after the validity period prescribed under Section 108(1A)(b) of the Companies Act, 1956;

(iv) transfer deeds lodged simultaneously in bulk by a large number of share-holders just before the book closure;

(v) delay in despatch/delivery of share certificates, duly transferred;

(vi) loss of transfer deeds in transit;

(vii) delay in collecting the share certificates, duly transferred, by the courier/agent of the transferee;

(viii) consolidation of odd lot of shares into marketable lot before transfer;

(ix) extra care taken to ensure that fake shares are not lodged;

(x) the transfer is in contravention of any law;

(xi) the transfer is prohibited by any order of court, Tribunal or other lawful authority; and

(xii) delay by companies with some ulterior motive.

(c) The steps to cope with the work load are required to be taken by the companies. Under Section 113 of the Companies Act, 1956, every company shall deliver share/debenture certificates, duly transferred, within two monthss from the date of lodgment of the requisite instruments of transfer. Any default in complying with these provisions is punishable with fine upto Rs. 500/- for every day during which the default continues. In the past, the Government have advised the companies to ensure compliance of these provisions of law, and prosecutions against several defaulting companies have been filed under Section 113 of the Act. The aggrieved transferor/ transferee may also move the Company Law Board under Section 111 of the Act.

In case of listed companies, there is a further safeguard provided in Section 22A of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act(1956, requiring companies to seek confirmation of the Company Law Board before refusing transfer of shares in specified circumstances. Besides, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the concerned Stock Exchanges also redress the grievances of the investors, n this regard. All companies making a public or rights issue are required to satisfy SEBI that they are attending to investor grievances in a reasonable manner, beforeth they proceed with the issue.

As a measure of investors' protection, the Companies Bill, 1993 proposes to provide for more stringent penalty provisions for delay in transfer of shares/debentures; to exempt the requirement of endorsement on the share transfer deed when the transactions are of a nominal value upto Rs. 50,000/- and to provide for free transferability of shares/debentures and restricting the rights of companies to refuse transfer of shares only on specified grounds.

In the case of listed companies, a contributory factor for delay is lodgement of a large number of scrips, just before the book closure and the consequent pressure on the companies can be mitigated if the scrips are lodged well in time before book closure.

Expedition to Nanda Devi

*149. SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some Army personnel have made expedition to Nanda Devi mountain in the recent past;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the climbers have since returned with any observations; and whether Government propose to undertake any research work on these observations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the programmes proposd to be undertaken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) to (d) An expedition to Nanda Devi was undertaken by a 36 member team comprising personnel from the Corps of Engineers of the Indian Army, Scienists and experts associated with Botanical Survey of India, Salim Ali Centre of Ornithology & Natural History, Wildlife Institute of India, Worldwide Fund for Nature, G.B. Pant Institute and officials from the Forest department of Uttar Pradesh, during the period 5th May 1993 to 12th July 1993.

The main aims of the expedition were to list the flora and fauna, assess the status of endangered species and to clean up the garbage left behind by the previous expeditions.

The team successfully carried out the listing of flora and fauna. They brought back 1000 kilograms of non-biodegradable garbage. Detailed studies on medicinal plants and floristic diversity pattern in the National Park were carried out.

The data provided by the team will contribute to the existing studies being carried out on the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.

Privatisation of ITDC Hotels

*150. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI:

SHRI IQBAL SINGH:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether various committees have felt that performance of some ITDC hotels have been most disappointing and these ITDC hotels are running into losses;

(b) whether it has been recommended that unless drastic steps are taken the situation would become unmanageable.

(c) whether Government have agreed for privatisation of these ITDC hotels; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. These are the observations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee rrelated to Transport & Tourism.

(c) The Government is contemplating on disinvestment of ITDC properties.

(d) It will take some time to arrive at a final decision.

News report regarding Italian Govt. advice to its nationals to avoid flying by Indian Airlines

*151. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state: